

# The ROBERT SERVICE CABIN



This two-room log cabin, set amidst the willows and the alders on the lower slopes at the eastern end of the town, has long been a tourist attraction. There, Robert W. Service, bard of the Klondike, lived from November 1909 to June 1912. During this time he wrote his melodramatic novel, *The Trail of Ninety-Eight*, and composed his third and final volume of Yukon verse, *Songs of a Rolling Stone*.

Service lived a spartan life. A remote figure, he was a good listener, absorbing, in his own words, "Yukon lore by every pore."

The cabin, which may have been built as early as 1897 or 1898, is typical of the time — logs well chinked with moss to keep out the sub-arctic cold, a double door, with front porch. It was heated by a wood stove, and probably illuminated by coal-oil lamps in Service's time, although downtown Dawson had had electricity since 1899–1900. A Mrs. Matilda Day held the original title to the property, dating from May, 1900, but it was later acquired by Mrs. Edna B. Clarke, from whom Service rented it during his later sojourn in Dawson.

The poet left Dawson for the last time on 29 June 1912, ostensibly on one of his periodic trips "outside" to consult with his publishers in Toronto and New York. *The Dawson Daily News* reported his departure in a few lines, without comment. By 1917 the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, with the owner's rather reluctant permission, were promoting the little cabin as a tourist attraction to raise money for soldiers' comforts overseas. After the war, the I.O.D.E. furnished the cabin in typical miner's style of the gold-rush period. Donated to the National Historic Sites Branch of Parks Canada by the City of Dawson, it has been restored to the period when Service lived in it.

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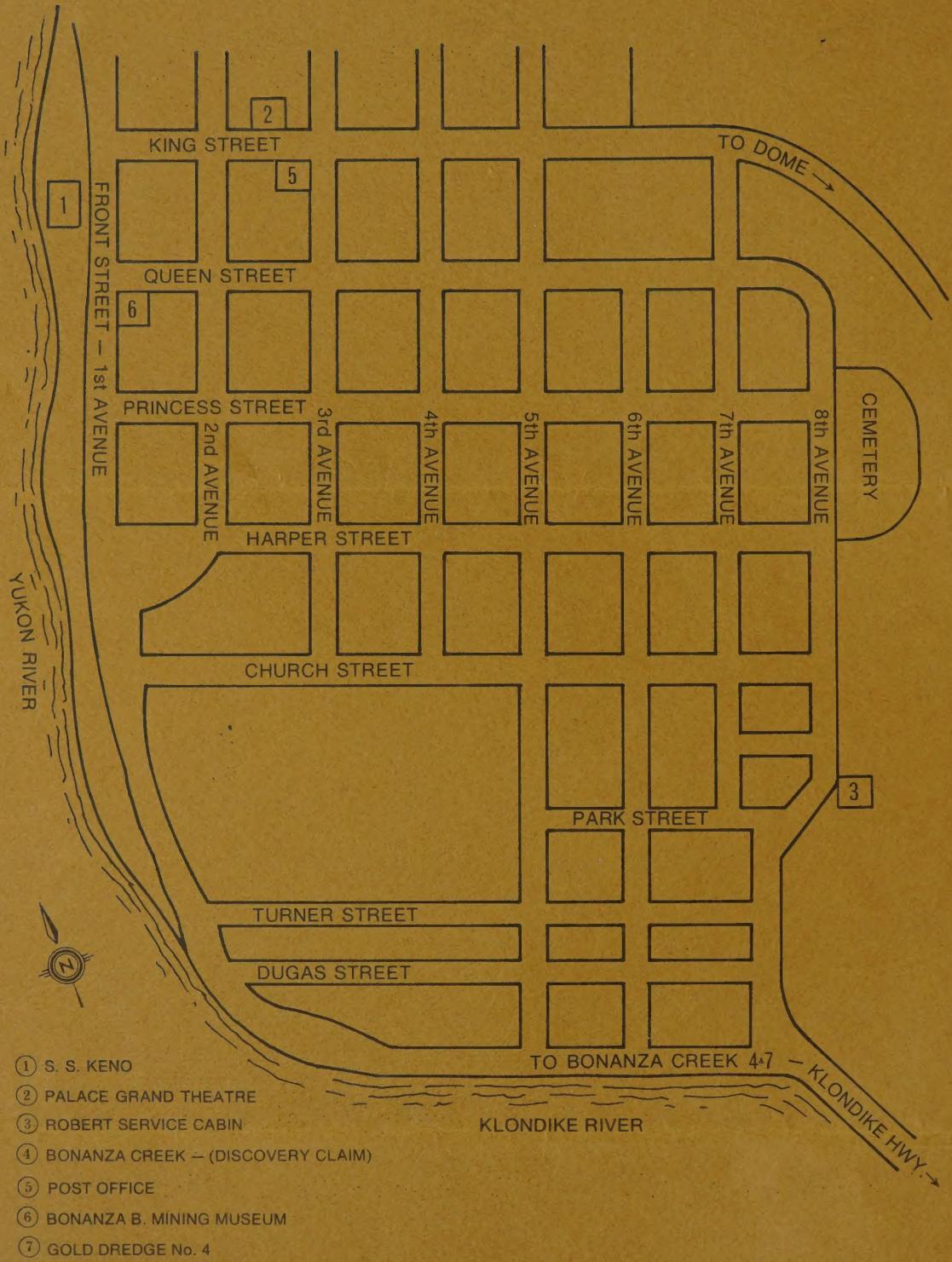
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